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AUTHOR Condon, E. C., Ed.; Freundlich, Joyce
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ABSTRACT

Verbal and nonverbal patterns of communication found in the black community are discussed in this paper. They have been selected on the basis of their potential as interference factors in intergroup communication. A section on black language describes and explains the following categories: rapping, running it down, jiving, shucking, copping a plea, sounding, playing the dozens, signifying, and marking. Besides these specific verbal styles, there are other verbal communication patterns prevalent in black culture such as inversion and loudtalking which are included. Major kinesic patterns (body language) found in black culture are described, along with their significance in an instructional situation. These include eye movements (eye-aversion, eye-rolling, and other uses of eye-movement), hand movement, and walking (the limp stance, pimp strut or pimp walk, black walk, and rapping). In order to achieve an effective level of communication with blacks, the white middle-class teacher is recommended to stop believing that, and acting as if, all black students are inferior or culturally deprived; and to stop believing that, and acting as if, black students must be made over into the superior image of the white middle class. (Author/AM)

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EXCERPT NO. 2: Selected Patterns of Interference
In Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication Between
Black and White Middle Class Cultures

E.C.Condon

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E. C. Condon, Director
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PAMPHLET NUMBER: 2

SELECTED PATTERNS OF INTERFERENCE IN: VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE MIDDLE-CLASS CULTURE

Editors: Dr. E. C. Condon, Director
Intercultural Relations & Ethnic Studies Institute
and
Mrs. Joyce Freundlich
Team Leader--Materials Development
Intercultural Relations & Ethnic Studies Institute
Rutgers Graduate School of Education

Based on a paper prepared by:
Louise Stokes
Norfolk State University
Virginia
1974

EXCERPT 2

SELECTED PATTERNS OF INTERFERENCE IN VERBAL & NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BLACK WHITE AND MIDDLE CLASS CULTURES

The many frustrations experienced by white, middle-class teachers when they attempt to relate effectively with Black students in class tend to originate mostly in cultural differences which separate the two groups and which are expressed in their communication and interaction systems. Such conflicts may, then, be minimized by providing these instructors with the cultural information needed by them to understand the salient features of the highly expressive communication style of these a-typical learners.

Communication failures in "mixed" classrooms have been identified repeatedly by researchers in past decades. Their findings do dictate that more attention should be given to the cultural communication patterns of culturally different learners, patterns which differ significantly from those of the dominant white community. As matters stand now, an overwhelming majority of the American white population know very little about the cultural patterns of Blacks, because they tend to operate largely within their own community, to the exclusion of all other groups. Yet, the only way in which valid information concerning the communication patterns of any group may be secured, must be through a close observation of, and involvement with, behaviors <u>within</u> the target community. The existing dearth of data on Black culture, thus

makes it imperative that teachers avail themselves of all opportunities to close this gap in their training and preparation to teach Black students. Especially crucial to them are an awareness of those misinterpreted interaction patterns that lead to misunderstanding and stereotyped thinking, and a recognition of the extent to which cultural factors may operate as barriers to effective communication between middle class teachers and their Black students. Without these knowledges, an instructor may teach successfully to his students the different pronunciations of pen and pin, and yet fail to generate the kind of meaningful interaction needed between himself and the students to convince the latter of the cultural significance attached to these differences in the working world.

In order to operate successfully in a crosscultural situation involving Black learners, a teacher who is a member of the dominant group will need to develop the following skills:

1. a recognition of, and sensitivity to, the language and communication patterns of Black students.
2. an understanding of how vital a role language and verbal styles play in Black culture.
3. a knowledge of both verbal styles and nonverbal communication patterns found in Black communities.

However, the transition from the customary white ignorance of Black culture to the recommended tri-level professional ability is not an easy one to accomplish. Many teachers believe implicitly that Blacks have no culture worthy of notice, and they

consider those aspects of culture exhibited by Black students as inferior distortions of the white man's "superior culture." Such negative attitudes will, then hinder the teacher's professional development toward intercultural understanding, as well as create barriers to effective communication in the classroom. And, without articulate communication, very little effective teaching and virtually no learning are likely to occur in the classroom.

BLACK LANGUAGE

Language is one of the primary means of communication. For the average Black individual language serves many effective functions: it defines him, tells him who he is, gives him a home base; in short, it is an inherent part of his cultural identity. He is a part of his language, as well as his language is a part of him. Thus, any attack on his language represents also an attack on his culture, on his family, and on his very self.

The fact that he likes his "dialect" is very important. He needs it to handle the many facets of his immediate and complex environment, and he often uses it to control certain difficult aspects of life as he confronts both his peers and the "outside" world (the dominant culture). In this respect, one must remember the sort of cultural conditioning--not unlike brainwashing--to which Black individuals are subjected from the time they interact with the dominant group.

When a white child comes to school for the first time he is

rewarded for his mastery of Standard English, the language of his home and family; the Black child, on the other hand, is punished for his mastery of "nonstandard" Black English, simply because the dominant and ruling culture has decreed arbitrarily that "nonstandard" is substandard and must be eradicated.

Whereas the white child receives formal instruction in his language and culture and is given numerous opportunities to use and display his knowledge of that culture, the Black child receives no formal instruction in his native dialect nor any information or creative display of his life style. Upon entering school, he finds himself rejected first because of his language and inept for his "alien" ways. He soon realizes that he is "wrong" from the moment he enters the classroom, where his speech and behavior results in conflicts with the teachers, usually reflected in severe reading problems, consequent difficulty in other subjects and frequently academic failure. Eventually the whole degrading process of cumulative negative learning experiences succeeds in destroying his self-esteem, thereby insuring his exclusion from full participation later on in the life of the dominant society. Thus, he becomes confused, ultra-sensitive, sometimes defensive and hostile when the teacher rejects him and his language and attempts to mold him in the middle class image. And at this very point, the learning experience reaches a standstill, seldom to be activated again.

Language, in the largest sense, as noted by Gay and Abraham[1], plays a fundamental role in the process of survival in the ghetto neighborhood, in addition to being the basis of acquiring leadership, status and success. Survival is based on one's versatility and adepteness in the use of words. The Black person uses his language to influence and persuade people, to fool "The Man", to outwit his peers, to pass on information and to control interpersonal relationships. To a Black youngster, verbal skill can mean the difference between being the leader or follower of the gang, between losing his life or talking someone into letting him live, between having food and shelter or starvation and eviction.

In many instances, a Black student will use his language to deal with his frustration and confusion with middle class teachers by shocking them with expressive, colorful and sometimes profane retorts. It should be noted, at this point, that this ability to use language effectively, is not restricted to ghetto youth, it extends to all facets of Black life. Jesse Jackson, Marin Luther King, Adam Clayton Powell are examples of men who handled verbal skills with adroitness and cleverness to persuade and move people to action. In this instance, then, language functions to a large extent as the basis of leadership and status in the Black community. In each case the speaker develops vocabulary and verbal skills for the purpose of winning a verbal game and gaining esteem, along with possible benefit from his group.

1. Abrahams, Roger-Gay, Geneva. "Black Culture in the Classroom." Language & Cultural Diversity in American Education p. 69

Under the circumstances, language serves not only as a communication device, but also as a mechanism of control and power.

Teachers should be aware of this propensity for verbal skill and the role it plays in Black life and they should direct this flair for verbal performance and expressive language into interesting and relevant classroom learning experiences. In order to facilitate his task, a listing of some of the most commonly practiced verbal styles is provided below, to help the teacher of Black students develop a deeper awareness and understanding of his students' culture. Such knowledge will also enable him to recognize when and if such tactics are being used in class to detract, confuse or frustrate him and to interfere with the instructional process.

The categories and explanations given below were mainly derived from the research findings of Roger Abraham and Thomas Kochman and Claudia Mitchell Kernan, as confirmed by the held observations of one of the writers -- Louise Stokes.[1]

1. Rapping

The term refers generally to a fluent, interesting, engaging lively conversation characterized by a large degree of personal style in which the speakers hope to draw the listerner's attention to something about himself that he considers attractive or prestigious.

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1. Stokes, Louise-Some Verbal & Non-Verbal Communicaton Patterns in Black Culture That Hinder Effective Communication Between White Teachers & Black Students-as prepared for Prof.Eliane Condon,World Communications-January 8,1974.

In Black culture, it is used more specifically by the Black male to make his desires known to the female, and to test her receptiveness to his "sales pitch."

In other words he "raps" to the female and in so doing he's "pushing a line." Whether or not the lady acquiesces depends on how good a "rap" he has "put down."

Rapping is used to get something from someone or to get someone to do something. A student may use rapping when he puts on a verbal performance to project his personality to impress the teacher with how "great" he is, hoping to get a favorable response from him.

2. Running It Down

This is a request for information, additions or clarification of a point already made. Sometimes the listener may be so surprised or shocked or impressed with the information that he will ask the speaker to "run it down" or "run it down again" or "run it through again." A teacher may think a student is being flippant or trying to get laughs when he does this and may ignore him.

This may be a call for help which the teacher, not recognizing nor understanding this particular pattern may very well ignore. If this happens, the student may lose interest and not bother to communicate with the teacher again because he fears rejection or humiliation before the entire class.

3. Jiving

The term refers to a comment or statement that is hard to

believe and conveys the impression that the speaker may not be giving a true account, or is offering at least a questionable one. Both speaker and listener realize that the statement may have no meaning or practical value. When a student describes a teacher's attempt to teach, he may call her class "jive" or her idle threats of punishment as "jiving". Jiving is sometimes referred to as "off the wall" talk which the speaker often uses to "put on" the listener. Historically, Blacks have used "jiving" to talk their way out of trouble where authority figures were involved. (Whites, judges, policemen, etc.)

4. Shucking

This is a special kind of "jive" used to accommodate "The Man" (any authority figure) to create a false sense of cooperation. It includes words, gestures, facial expression, any device necessary to create whatever appearance is required by the particular situation, to portray the speaker as simple-minded, submissive, and pleading, and to mask his true feelings.

By "shucking"the Black man takes the white man's sterotype of him and uses them to his advantage by doing what is "apparently" expected of him.

The deception is so real and authentic that the average white is usually unable to detect it, but it is difficult for one black to "shuck" another, since both are equally schooled in the art. Today, many young Blacks, because of their new assertiveness and racial pride, do not use shucking in dealing with the white man.

5. Copping a Plea

A communication technique, similar to "shucking" and "jiving" in that it, too, is used to get out of a compromising situation. "Copping" is more direct than "shucking" or "jiving", since the speaker makes an appeal for mercy, pity, or some other kind of sympathy. Usually, one loses face when "copping a plea" because one asks or begs for mercy or pity, thus showing fear and insecurity in the presence of a superior force or [illegible] strength. When a student "cops a plea" he is begging-almost on his knees-the teacher for a passing grade, etc. even though both he and the teacher know that he has not done the work. His "sob story" will be so authentic, one may not be able to detect the wily wit behind it.

6. Sounding

The term refers to a verbal exchange designed to insult. It has been known in the past as "playing the dozens", the "dirty dozens" or just "the dozens". In Chicago, "sounding" refers to the initial remarks designed to "[illegible] out" the other person to see whether he will play the game. The verbal insult consists of two parts: "signifying", which refers to insults hurled at the person in any indirect manner and "the dozen" which refers to insults addressed specifically toward a member of the other person's family, especially the mother.

7. Playing the Dozens

This is also called "mother rapping" and is used to direct verbal insults at one's mother (although other members of the family may be included) as a result of "being sounded on."

For example, a person (a) may "sound on" another (b) by saying "are you going to let him say that about your mama" after someone (c) has made an insulting remark about b's mother. As a result, b feels compelled to counterattack with a remark that is just as, or even more, insulting. The ensuing verbal exchange of insults continues with each trying to outdo the other in originality and vituperation. Most of the time, the insults are in the form of rhyming verses, and at others, they may be short sharp comments beginning with "ya mamma". Quite possibly and probably, students will and do "sound on" and "play the dozens" using the teacher as the object of the insult.

8. Signifying

Abraham defines "signifying" as a "language behavior that attempts to imply, goad, beg or boast by indirect verbal or gestural means."[1] The element of indirection is the identifying criterial element of "signifying". When signifying is expressive, i.e., to arouse feelings of embarrassment, shame, frustration or futility for the purpose of diminishing someone's status, but without directive implication, the tactic employed is in the form of a "taunt".

Thus, it is "signifying" to make fun of a policeman by parodying his motions behind his back.

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1. Abraham, Roger "Positively Black and Deep Down in the Jungle" p.267. Hatboro Penna. Folklore Associates 1964.

9. Marking

This refers to a mode of characterization in which the "marker" through producing the words and affecting the voice and mannerism of a speaker, "attempts to report not only what was said, but the way it was said in order to offer implicit comment on the speaker's background, personality or intent."[1] Usually, the "marker" attempts to replay a scene for his hearers, indirectly showing in his performance that the speaker's action may have been feigned, so he may over-play the performance into a parody or caricature of what was actually said and done. Students will use "marking" to provide parodic and caricatures of their teachers in action.

Teachers of Black students should be aware that these students are quite proficient in the verbal skills mentioned above and the premium placed on proficiency in such skills by members of the Black culture. The teacher can also rest assured that Black students will use whichever of these skills are necessary and appropriate to protect themselves and maintain status in the eyes of their peers.

10. Inversion

Besides the specific verbal styles explained above, there are other verbal communication patterns prevalent in Black culture.

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1. Abraham, Roger. Deep Down in the Jungle. Hatboro, Penna. Folklore Associates. 1964

One such feature is called "inversion" by Grace Sims Holt.[1] "Inversion", a protective device, understood and shared in the Black community, is a technique of reversal of word meanings, i.e., words and phrases are given opposite meanings and function change.

Like many other verbal patterns, "inversion" was and is still used by Blacks as a defense mechanism designed to impart one meaning to whites while really meaning something else. Since the inverted meaning is known only to the invertor and since whites denied the "semantic extensions of duality, connotations and denotations that developed with black usage,"[2] they can only interpret the information according to its original or standard meaning. Frequently words used by the dominant group to designate or stereotype Blacks are used by Blacks in their in-group relationships as terms of affection, admiration or approval, truly an exact opposite of the original intention. The word "nigger" is an example. When used by whites, it has a traditional meaning of denigration and degradation for Blacks; when Blacks say "you're my kind of nigger", "that's my nigger", "the niggers are getting their mess together," the connotations are more of admiration and compliment.

In these instances, the word presents another way of communicating the feeling of group solidarity, togetherness, identity, and brotherhood.

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1. Holt. Grace Sims. "Inversion in Black Communication," Rappin and Stylin Out T. Kochman. Urbana. Univ. of Ill. Press, 1972. pp.152-153
2. ibed.

When whites use the word usually with a negative meaning, it becomes a fighting word with Blacks, but when Blacks use it, the meaning usually has a favorable connotation.

Other examples of "inversion" are the words "bad",(she has on a "bad dress", he gave a "bad speech") which means good, beautiful, attractive; "tough" (Girl, you are "tough enough", isn't she "tough")--which means good looking, attractive, stylishly dressed; "black" which before the Black "revolution", carried the connotation of something shameful because black skin was once looked upon as a thing of shame, now has a positive, symbolic meaning. ("Black is beautiful")

11. Loud-Talking

A speech art defined by Mitchell Kernanan as a "speaker's utterance which by virtue of its volume permits hearers other than the addressee and is objectionable because of this."[1]

The intent of "loud talking" is mean, malicious, catty, spiteful or simply to embarrass or antagonize a person or put him at a disadvantage.

An example of "loud talking" follows: A female student enters a classroom late. Noticing that the teacher is writing on the board and, of course, does not see her, she slips quietly to her seat. The young man sitting near her blurts out loud enough for the teacher and others to hear, "Hey, Anne, where you coming from this time of day? Bus leave you?"

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1. Kernanan, Mitchell. "Signifying, Loud-Talking & Marking." p.139 Rappin' and Stylin' Out, T. Kochman(ed.) Urbana:University of Ill. Press,1972

Anne will probably reply angrily. "Oh shut up. You didn't have to loud-talk me." Teachers would do well to recognize the meaning of "loud-talking" because students will also "loud-talk" the teacher sometimes to embarrass or antagonize them.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN BLACK CULTURE

A complementray aspect of linguistic expression in face to face interaction is found in body language. It is particularly important in the communication styles of Black people, for it has served them as a natural means of conveying "hidden" information to members of their group in the presence of unsuspecting (and uninformed) whites. As was the case for verbal strategies, the use of specific nonverbal signals permitted Black individuals to communicate with each other, to pass on information behind a facade of submission and humility while, at the same time, maintaining a semblance of inner dignity and satisfaction.

Some of the major kinesic patterns (body language) found in Black culture will be found described below, along with their significance in an instructional situation. They include such meaningful body movements as eye and hand motions, and styles of walking.

1. Eye Movements

The interpretation of eye motions represent probably one of the most striking instances of communication failure between white teachers and Black students within and without the classroom. Two important signals which should be kept in mind are :eye aversion and eye-rolling.

a. Eye-Aversion

The custom of eye-avertence or aversion is one many teachers fail to understand. In many Black families, especially in the South, young children are taught that looking an older person in the eye is a sign of disrespect, hostility, or defiance. In white culture, on the other hand, looking a person in the eye "communicates trustworthiness, forthrightness, masculinity, truthfulness, and sincerity." In Black cultural context, "eye-aversion" is a non-verbal way of communicating a recognition of the authority-subordinate relationship of the participants in the social situation.

This Black cultural phenomenan has its origin in slavery, when many Blacks, maintained the eye-avertence custom to mask their true feelings towards the white man as well as to protect themselves from abuse, insult, humiliation and sometimes violence. At that time if a Black looked a white man in the eye he was considered an "uppity nigger" who needed to be "put in his place."

b. Eye-Rolling

Another communication pattern involving eye behavior is the movement of the eye called "rolling the eye" in Black culture.

Usually, in a conflict situation involving a parent and child, or a teacher and student, the Black person will express his hostility or disapproval of the authority person by "rolling his eyes." The movement of the eye consists of moving the eyes from one side of the eye socket to the other, lowering the lids in the process and moving the eyes away from the person.

"Rolling the eyes" is far more common among Black females than Black males. Sometimes, the female will accompany the movement with a slight but sharp tilt of the head, twitching of the nose, or slight turning of the body away from the other person, or sometimes all three.

Many Black parents and teachers, upon noting the eye movement, will most likely admonish the guilty party by saying: "Don't roll your eyes at me" or "don't look at me in that tone of voice."

c. Other Uses of Eye Movements

Blacks communicate many eye movements to indicate boredom, disapproval and agreement. These eye movements are usually accompanied by body movements. For example, if a speaker (or teacher) is especially boring, many Blacks will either put their heads back, close their eyes and/or turn away from the speaker or they will change position and turn around to catch the eye of other Blacks, giving a hard stare which communicates their rejection, boredom or disagreement. If they are placed with the speaker they will usually sit forward in their seats or bend slightly forward, catching the eye of other Blacks and smiling approval. They may also close their eyes and nod in agreement at the same time, then change position before settling themselves in their original position.

Annette Powell Williams observes that Black audiences (or classes) usually respond to the speaker (teacher) with movement rather than applause; the white speakers (or teachers) may

consider this a discourtesy when in reality it is the Blacks way of registering their approval.[1]

For effective communication, teachers need to watch the byplay of eyes and/or accompanying body movements among their Black students because it is certain that they are sending silent messages that may be either favorable or unfavorable to the teacher.

2. Hand Movement

The hands also play a vital part in nonverbal communication among Blacks. "Giving skin" and "getting skin" are very common actions, especially among the young males.

Used mostly for greeting or parting from one another, as well as a gesture of agreement and approval, "skinning" is done in several ways:

Palm to palm contact, back of hand to upward-facing palm, and both palms to palm contact (also called emphasis skin).

"Giving skin: also means a compliment when one has performed will in a particular job or activity, and there's one gesture "five on the sly" given with one hand behind the speaker to express inconspicuously mutual agreement with something that is being said or done.

With many of the Black militants, the Black power handshake is used instead of the skin action as a greeting:nevertheless, "giving skin" remains a viable greeting among the average Black student.

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1. Williams, Arnette P."Dynamics of a Black Audience." Rappin and Stylin' Out. T. Kochman (ed.) Urbana.Univ.of Ill.P. Press.1972 pg.106

3. Walking

Standing stances and style of walking also communicate certain nonverbal messages, especially among young Blacks. These cultural behaviors indicate both positive and negative messages which the teacher should be aware of if she hopes to ease conflicts and tensions that may arise in her classes.

a. The limp stance is one many young Blacks take when they are being reprimanded by one in authority. In this position, the head is lowered, the body becomes extremely relaxed, almost limp, and the person stands looking trance-like at nothing in particular. Nonverbally, he is saying: "what you're saying is like water running down a duck's back: it's rolling right off without sinking in" or "you are talking to my body because my mind is somewhere else away or you are talking to an object, not a person."

Ken Johnson's advice to teachers when Black students who observe a limp stance as a reaction to a reprimand or some conflict, is to end the reprimand as quickly and gracefully as possible because the Student is not receiving the message.[1]

b. "Pimp Strut or Pimp Walk"

This "Black Walk" may be described thusly: the foot is placed directly in front of the other with the heel hitting first and the leg dropping loosely which gives a bended leg effect.

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1. Johnson,Kenneth,"Black Kinesics:Some Nonverbal Communication Patterns in Black Culture,"Wadsworth Pub.,Calif.1972.pg.185

The head is sometimes slightly elevated and tipped to one side, and the shoulders sway slightly or naturally with a slight dropping of the shoulder which moves forward. The general overall effect is a slow, stroll-like, casual, swinging, rhythmic gait. Since young Blacks pride themselves on originality and individuality in this stylistic gesture, many of them add variations on their own brand of "styling" to the walk such as swinging one arm while tucking the other hand in the pocket, or varying the speed of the gait, or swing of the head or even affecting a slight limp.

The "Black Walk" is peculiarly and uniquely the young Black's walk, a way of telling the world that he is "cool", that he is "hanging loose" and not upset or "uptight" about the world.

c. Black Walk and Rapping

Contexts in which the "black walk"is relevant may be seen in reference to the verbal style of "rapping" described earlier in this paper.

The "Black Walk" and "rapping" stance are used to reinforce the verbal act. When the young Black male approves the girl of his choice with his walk, he lets her know that he is a "cool dude" who wants to "rap" with her. Upon reaching her, he assumes the "rapping" stance-standing very close but at a slight angle to her with one shoulder lowered, head slightly elevated and to one side,with the corresponding leg brought forward and gesturing with his hands to nail home a "silent rap".

Johnson describes the rapping stance, " a kind of stationary pimp strut."[1] It must be emphasized here that not all Black students adopt any of the behavior just described, preference, rather than socio-economic background, is the dominant factor in this case. However, patterns are sufficiently prevalent among a substantial number of Blacks that they may be taken as characteristic of the Black group without running the risk of stereotyping all of its members.

CONCLUSIONS

The verbal and nonverbal patterns which have been discussed in this paper are but a few of the many cultural signals found in the Black community. They were selected among others on the basis of their potential as interference factors in intergroup communication. Classroom experience has indeed shown that these particular patterns have repeatedly provided barriers to successful interaction between the white middle-class teacher and his Black students.

Since meaningful learning is predicated upon a two-way, free flow of information between the teacher and the learner, it is quite evident that this educational experience cannot take place in a "mixed" classroom, where communication breakdowns are apt to occur as a result of misinterpreted signals--verbal or nonverbal.

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1. Johnson, Kenneth, "Black Kinesics: Some Nonverbal Communication Patterns in Black Culture, Wadsworth Pub.,Calif.1972. pg.47

And the status quo is likely to persist, unless the teacher learns to recognize, accept and utilize cultural differences and their external manifestations in the five-and-take of an instructional situation.

In order to achieve an effective level of communication with Blacks the white, middle-class teacher would be wise to bear in mind the following recommendations:

1. Stop believing that acting as if, all Black students are "inferior","culturally deprived," "culturally disadvantaged," or "genetically inferior." They are not.

2. Stop believing that, and acting as if, Black students must be "made over" into the "superior" image of the white, middle class. They do not want to change, and, because they are "different" does not mean they are "wrong."

3. Work incessantly toward overcoming his own unconscious prejudices and conquering his negative unconsious attitudes toward nonconforming learners, by sincerely involving himself with the language and culture of these students. To do so, he need not learn so-called Black English, but simply be aware of, and treat, linguistics and other differences as legitimate, rather than as nonpermissible departures from the dominant communication norms.

4. Learn to recognize and interpret correctly the major communication signals of the Black community and, especially, to react to these from a Black, not white, viewpoint.

5. Learn to recognize, and cope effectively with the stylistic devices which Black individuals are likely to use as weapons against white teachers. In so doing, the teacher will earn the respect of his students which will, then, serve as a basis for positive relationships.

6. Learn to capitalize on the strengths of Black students particularly their fondness and facility for oral performance and their expressive use of body language in face to face interaction. Such talents can be, and should be, channeled into counteractive learning experiences, instead of being allowed to fester destructively as willful obstacles to classroom communication.

7. Maintain a two-way, free flow of communication in the classroom by talking to the students about their lives, families, hopes and fears; by exchanging information about cultural patterns, beliefs and attitudes; and by learning more about Black culture through direct involvement with community life, churches, social functions, and the like.

By sincerely winning the respect, confidence and friendship of the students, the teacher will succeed in establishing a positive classroom atmosphere in which learning will become an enjoyable, rather than a traumatic, experience for all participants. Very soon in life, Black youngsters learn to detect the phonies, curiosity seekers, do-gooders, and white "missionaries." But, while they will resent any intrusion into their lives when it is carried out in a patronizing, condescending and overbearing manner, they will readily welcome a teacher's genuine interest in their background

their background as a mark of acceptance and recognition of individual identity.

Because of the long-standing history of Black-white mistrust and suspicion, no white, middle-class teacher may expect to establish an open climate of mutual acceptance in a mixed classroom overnight. But, with steady perseverance and gentle persuasion, these ideal conditions will eventually become actualized, and the rewards of equal learning opportunity, thereby, will be reaped by both the teacher and his students.